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SUBJECT: Zagreb Daily Report - January 26, 2010

11. (U) SDP Announces Six Months of Cooperation on Economic Reforms: Former Social Democratic Party (SDP) Finance Minister, Slavko Linic, a close confidant to SDP chief, Zoran Milanovic, announced on Monday that Croatia's main opposition party is prepared to cooperate with the government to find bipartisan solutions to improve the ailing Croatian economy. Linic indicated that for a period of six months the SDP would refrain from criticizing the government's economic policy or insisting on early elections. Linic emphasized that the SDP would seek to work constructively with Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor for the benefit of all Croats. Local media have portrayed Linic's announcement as a de-facto temporary truce between the SDP and Kosor's Croatian Democratic Union. An early indication of how this cooperation may take shape could come by the end of the month, when Kosor plans to table a proposal for an economic recovery fund to provide loans to struggling businesses.

(U) Afghan Visitors Provide Independent Perspective on Afghanistan: The President of the Afghan Red Crescent Society, Fatima Gailani, and the Project Manager of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Abaceen Nasimi, visited Zagreb January 24-26, discussing security, reconstruction and humanitarian assistance from an Afghan viewpoint. The visitors had an intensive schedule, meeting with journalists, Ministry of Defense officials, Croatian soldiers, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, high school students, Muslim community leaders, and university students. The Ambassador hosted a dinner in honor of the visitors with representatives of leading NGO's. The visit underscored the importance of the ISAF mission by providing Croatian decision makers and the public with an independent and expert perspective on conditions and events in Afghanistan. A more detailed report on the substance of their discussions will be provided septel.

(U) Croatia Continues Its Demining Efforts: The Croatian Demining Center (CROMAC) reported on January 26 that in 2009 over 37 million square meters of mine suspected area was searched, of which more than 15 million square meters was demined. On average, 757 square meters was searched and demined on a weekly basis. Over the course of the year 3395 anti-personnel mines, 5267 anti-tank mines and 1186 pieces of UXO were detected and destroyed. CROMAC calculates that some 887 square kilometers of suspected area remains to be searched and demined, with sites spread across 12 of Croatia's 20 counties.

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